

## **VIOLENCE AND CRIME IN LATIN AMERICA**

**LAS 4935 / LAS 6938 / ANG6930 / ANT4930**

Draft syllabus for Fall 2012

Tuesday 3-5 period (9:35-12:35)

Location: TBA

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What implications do different forms of organized brutalities and illegalities have for the governance of the contemporary state in Latin America? How have crime and violence in their variety of manifestations bypassed, challenged, or reinforced law and order? The seminar examines historical social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of violence and crime in present-day Latin America. It traces the colonial legacies of violent extractions to the existing conflicts over natural resources; analyzes discourses and practices of terror under authoritarian regimes and within the paramilitary state; interrogates the rise of violent crime in the city and the related patterns of urban segregation. The course further examines the issues of organized crime, such as drug production and trafficking, international gangs and multifaceted violence on the borders, primarily the U.S. – Mexico border. Throughout the semester we will discuss the politics of the discursive constructions of crime and violence. In order to do that, we will probe the question of how to quantify crime and how to define violence, as we position practices and events on the continuum from individual assault to its collective (class, ethnic, racial, religious, gender) forms to the broadest conditions and structures of suffering, as suggested by the terms “structural violence” and “violence of everyday life.” The seminar will pay special attention to the questions of how law, governance, transnationalism, violence and crime relate. Therefore, we will ask where the boundary between the legal and the illegal, the legitimate and the illicit lies, in order to understand the complex and often paradoxical relationship that the contemporary Latin American state has with its official nemesis, the criminal economy and alternative forms of violence, threatening its authoritative monopoly. Last but not least we will discuss the scars of violence and crime on communities throughout Latin America and explore the creative ways that residents respond to them.

### **REQUIRED BOOKS:**

Caldeira, Teresa

2000 City of walls: crime, segregation, and citizenship in São Paulo: Berkeley: University of California Press.

Taussig, Michael T.

2003 Law in a lawless land: diary of a "limpieza" in Colombia. New York: New Press.

Gootenberg, Paul

2008 Andean cocaine: the making of a global drug: University of North Carolina Press.

Bruneau, Thomas C., Dammert, Lucía, Skinner, Elizabeth

2011 Maras: gang violence and security in Central America. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

**OPTIONAL BOOKS:**

Chasteen, John Charles

2001 Born in blood and fire: a concise history of Latin America: Norton.

All remaining class readings can be downloaded from the Sakai course page.

**ASSIGNMENTS and GRADING:**

**Participation (20%):** This class is a seminar; therefore, active informed participation in discussions is expected. You will need to carefully prepare for every class: Come ready to share your thoughts and questions on the assigned texts. Always bring the copy of that day's readings to class.

Absence for reasons of illness, religious holiday or official university business is excused. Please inform the instructor as early as possible and provide appropriate documentation. You are responsible to contact a classmate to obtain notes on the materials covered. You are allowed one unexcused absence. After the second unexcused absence your final grade will be reduced a full letter. Students with four or more unexcused absences will fail.

**Midterm Exam (20%):** This will be a take-home exam. Exam questions will be handed out in class on October 15 and due in class on October 22. The questions for the assignment will be explicitly tied to course readings and discussions, with room for the introduction of student's own interests.

**Seminar Presentation (20%):** Each student will prepare and present one seminar report on the readings assigned for a particular week. In addition to providing a summary of the text(s), this report should situate the readings within the broader ideas and concepts of the course. It should also outline questions for class discussion. A day before class (no later than 6:00pm on Sunday) students in charge of that week's report must circulate discussion points and guiding questions via Sakai.

**Research Essay (40%):** The final essay (12-15 pages), due on December 3, is a theoretical investigation of a research project of your choice. It should critically and creatively examine one or more of the class themes. Specific topic must be elaborated in consultation with the instructor.

Graduate students have a choice of either taking the midterm exam in addition to the final essay, or write a longer research paper (20-25 pages), which directly contributes towards the development of their thesis, dissertation chapter, conference paper or publication.

All students must hand in a 250-300-word abstract of their research essay on November 5. The final paper is due by the last day of class.

**Extra credit:** If you attend a conference, participate in a public discussion or other public event, watch a film or a play that broadly relates to the topics discussed in this class, you can post a one-page review on the class blog and receive extra credit to mitigate your participation grade.

**Papers:** Both the midterm exam and the final research paper must:

- Use 12-point Times New Roman or similar font;
- Be Double-spaced, with 1 inch margins;
- Include your last name and page number in the header/footer of each page;
- Cite all sources in Modern Language Association (MLA) or American Anthropological Association (AAA) format.

Please turn in a hard copy of all assignments and post them through Sakai.

**Late Work and Extensions:** Assignments for the midterm exam and the research paper will be handed out well in advance of their due date. If you know you will not be able to turn in the assignment on time, please notify the instructor as early as possible. Extensions are not granted lightly and must be arranged in advance. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class and will be marked down a grade for each day they are late (i.e., a B+ paper turned in a day late will receive a B).

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

All work submitted by a student for a grade must be completed by that student and free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating is a grade of zero points on the assignment in question; in such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These are available online at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studenthandbook/studentrights.php#academichonestyguidelines>

**ADA STATEMENT:**

“Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific accommodations. Students will be asked to supply a letter from the Disability Resource Center to assist in planning accommodations.”

**GRADING SCALE:**

The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing).

Regarding university grading policies, be advised that a grade of C- is not valid for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or for college basic distribution credit. For questions about minus grades, please see <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>.

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

**HEALTH AND COUNSELING:**

The University offers the following health and counseling services for students in the event personal problems threaten to hinder academic performance:  
 University Counseling Center (301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575),  
 Student Mental Health (Student Health Care Center, 392-1171), and  
 Sexual Assault Recovery Services (Student Health Care Center, 392-1161).

Please note: The Instructor may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignments during the course of the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### Week 1:

#### **DEFINING VIOLENCE AND CRIME**

Benjamin, Walter

1996 Critique of Violence. *In* Selected writings / Uniform Title: Selections. English. 1996. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press.

Coronil, Fernando, and Julie Skurski

2006 Introduction: States of Violence and the Violence of States. *In* States of violence. F. Coronil and J. Skurski, eds. Pp. 1-31: University of Michigan Press.

United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

2007 Crime and Development in Central America: Caught in the Crossfire. Electronic document,

<http://www.unodc.org/pdf/Central%20America%20Study.pdf>.

### Week 2:

#### **ORIGINS OF VIOLENCE**

De las Casas, Bartolomé

1974 In defense of the Indians; the defense of the Most Reverend Lord, Don Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, of the Order of Preachers, late Bishop of Chiapa, against the persecutors and slanderers of the peoples of the New World discovered across the seas. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press. (Selected chapters)

Chasteen, John Charles

2001 Born in blood and fire: a concise history of Latin America: Norton. Pp. 63-92.

Lomnitz-Adler, Claudio

2005 Death and the idea of Mexico. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Zone Books: Cambridge, Mass.; Distributed by MIT Press. Pp. 375-412.

### Week 3:

#### **VIOLENT EXTRACTIONS**

Taussig, Michael T.

1986 Shamanism, colonialism, and the wild man: a study in terror and healing: University of Chicago Press. Part 1 (chapters 1-6).

Sawyer, Suzana

2004 Crude chronicles: indigenous politics, multinational oil, and neoliberalism in Ecuador. *In* American encounters/global interactions. Duke University Press. Pp. 27-90.

### Week 4:

#### **STATE TERROR**

- Feitlowitz, Marguerite  
 1998 *A lexicon of terror: Argentina and the legacies of torture*: Oxford University Press. Pp. 19-63.
- Robben, Antonius C. G. M.  
 2000 *State Terror in the Netherworld: Disappearance and Reburial in Argentina. In Death Squad: the Anthropology of State Terror*. J.A. Sluka, ed. Pp. 91-113. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Timerman, Jacobo  
 2002 *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number / Uniform Title: Preso sin nombre, celda sin número*. English. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press. (Selections)
- Chasteen, John Charles  
 2001 *Born in blood and fire: a concise history of Latin America*: Norton. Pp. 275-306.

Week 5:

**PARAMILITARY STATE**

- Taussig, Michael T.  
 2003 *Law in a lawless land: diary of a "limpieza" in Colombia*. New York: New Press.
- Taussig, Michael T.  
 1992 [1988] *Terror as Usual: Walter Benjamin's Theory of History as State of Siege. In The Nervous System*. Pp. 11-35. New York: Routledge.

Week 6:

**DISCOURSE AND ITS DISCONTENTS**

- Briggs, Charles L.  
 2007 *Mediating Infanticide: Theorizing Relations between Narrative and Violence Source. Cultural Anthropology 22(3): 315-356.*
- Coronil, Fernando, and Julie Skurski  
 2006 *Dismembering and Remembering the Nation: The Semantics of Political Violence in Venezuela. In States of violence*. F. Coronil and J. Skurski, eds. Pp. 83-143: University of Michigan Press.
- Tate, Winifred  
 2007 *Counting the dead: the culture and politics of human rights activism in Colombia*: University of California Press. Pp. 31-72.

Week 7:

**URBAN SEGREGATION**

- Caldeira, Teresa  
 2000 *City of walls: crime, segregation, and citizenship in São Paulo*: Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 8:

**DRUG TRAFFICKING (1)**

- Gootenberg, Paul

2008 Andean cocaine: the making of a global drug: University of North Carolina Press.

Week 9:

**DRUG TRAFFICKING (2)**

Arias, Enrique Desmond

2006 Drugs & democracy in Rio de Janeiro: trafficking, social networks, & public security. University of North Carolina Press. Pp. 130-206.

Wald, Elijah

2001 Narcocorrido: a journey into the music of drugs, guns, and guerrillas. New York, NY: Rayo. Pp. 47-69.

Week 10:

**GANG VIOLENCE**

Bruneau, Thomas C., Dammert, Lucía, Skinner, Elizabeth

2011 Maras: gang violence and security in Central America. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Week 11:

**THE BORDER**

Van Schendel, Willem, and Itty Abraham, eds.

2005 Illicit flows and criminal things: states, borders, and the other side of globalization. Indiana University Press. Pp. 1-68.

Heyman, Josiah M. C. C.

2002 U.S. Immigration Officers of Mexican Ancestry as Mexican Americans, Citizens, and Immigration Police. *Current Anthropology* 43(3): 479-507.

Week 12:

**COMMUNITY RESPONSE (1)**

Goldstein, Daniel M.

2004 The spectacular city: violence and performance in urban Bolivia: Duke University Press. (Selected chapters)

Lomnitz-Adler, Claudio

2005 "Death in the Contemporary Ethnoscape." *In* Death and the idea of Mexico. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Zone Books: Cambridge, Mass.; Distributed by MIT Press. Pp. 453-482.

Week 13:

**COMMUNITY RESPONSE (2)**

Stolen, Kristi Anne

2007 Guatemalans in the aftermath of violence: the refugees' return. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Pp. 19-154.